



Wisconsin All-Terrain Vehicle Laws



This pamphlet is not a complete set of ATV laws; however, it supplies the essential information. Please read it carefully. If you have any questions, contact the Department of Natural Resources or your local law enforcement authorities.

Check with local governing agencies for local ordinances.

The Future of ATV Riding in Wisconsin Depends On You—Ride Responsibly

This publication is available upon request in alternate formats for visually impaired persons. Please contact Corinne Billings at (608) 264-9246 to request an alternate format.

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Department of Natural Resources
Box 7921 Madison, Wisconsin 53707

For ATV and safety information, visit our web site at:
<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/es/enforcement/safety/ATVed.htm>

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Contents

Accidents	19
Agricultural Use	3
Age Restrictions & Certificate Requirements.	7–11
Alcohol/Drugs, Operating Under the Influence	7
Dealers	5, 6
Decals and Display	4
Definitions	24
Distance and Hours Restrictions	16
DNR Service Centers	28
Enforcement	20
Equipment—Brakes, Lights and Exhaust Requirements	18
Exhaust	18
Funding	23
Helmet Requirements	14
Highways—U.S., State, County, Town	10–12
Landowner Information	20
Lights	18
License (Safety Certification) requirements	8–11
Lost or Destroyed Decals/ Registrations	5
Motorcycles	20
Nonresidents, Registration Requirements	4
Operation, Rules	6–18
Ordinances—Town, City or County Rules	20
Penalties	26
Private Property Use	16
Program Information, How Is The Program Funded?	23
Races	19
Registration	3–6
Renters/Rental	18
Residents, Registration Requirements	3
Roads	7–19
Routes	7, 10–14, 17–20
Rules for Operating an ATV	6–18
Safety Recommendations and Ethics	21
Signs	15, 22
Small ATV	3
Speed Limits	16
Trail Ambassadors	24
Trail Signs	15
Trail Pass	4
Trailer Information	20
Validation, Validated Receipts	4, 5
Weight Limits and width restriction (See ATV definition)	24

The development and maintenance of Wisconsin's network of ATV trails is accomplished through the efforts of hundreds of ATV club members and private citizens. Their volunteer time is spent performing the crucial tasks of maintaining and preparing trails by brushing, grading, signing the trails, trail grooming and performing safety inspections.

Please consider joining an ATV club; your help is needed. By staying on the trail, you show your respect for the hard work of the local clubs and the rights of the property owners who have graciously allowed ATVing across their land.

To legally operate an ATV in Wisconsin, the ATV must display current registration decals OR you must possess a *Validated Receipt* (form 9400-376). See the section “How do I register my ATV.”

Registration

Before you register your machine, you must ensure it is an ATV by Wisconsin standards.

What is an ATV according to Wisconsin? An ATV is an engine-driven device which has a *net weight of 900 pounds or less*, which has a *width of 48 inches or less*, which is equipped with a *seat designed to be straddled* by the operator and which is designed to *travel on 3 or more low-pressure tires*. A low-pressure tire is a *tire which has a minimum width of 6 inches*, which is designed to be mounted on a *rim with a maximum diameter of 12 inches* and which is designed to be inflated with an operating pressure not to exceed 6 pounds per square inch as recommended by the manufacturer. This definition includes Small ATVs—see the definitions in the back of this pamphlet for the specific qualifications.

Residents—As a resident of Wisconsin, you have three options of registering your ATV.

- ◆ **Public Use** Registration—Allows you to operate your ATV on any area open to public riding and on private property with the appropriate permission. In particular, please note that public registration is required to operate your ATV on the frozen surface of any lake or stream. Public registrations are valid for 2 years, which begins July 1 and expires two years later on June 30th. It is recommended that you carry the registration certificate with you while riding. If the proof of registration is in the form of a “validated receipt,” you **MUST** carry the validation with you while riding and it must be presented to an enforcement officer when requested. Fee—\$12.
- ◆ **Agricultural Use** Registration—ATVs can be privately registered if they are going to be used *exclusively* for agricultural purposes. If you register the ATV under agricultural use only, you will not be able to use the ATV on areas open to the public. The registration remains valid until the ATV is transferred. Fee—\$6.
- ◆ **Private Use** Registration—Allows the owner to register an ATV for use *exclusively* on private property. If you register the ATV only for private use, you will not be able to use the ATV on areas open to the public. The registration remains valid until the ATV is transferred. Fee—\$6.

ATVs can be registered as public, private and agricultural. A combination of registrations is often the case when a person needs to use the ATV for agricultural purposes and also wants to operate the same ATV on areas open to the public (trails, corridors, frozen lakes, open county lands, etc.)

Nonresidents—As a nonresident, you may operate your ATV in Wisconsin with your state, province or country's current registration as long as;

- ◆ The decal (or proof of registration) is prominently displayed
- ◆ The ATV has not been in Wisconsin for more than 15 consecutive days.
- ◆ The proof of registration from your home state is carried with you while riding. Proof must be presented to an enforcement officer when requested.
- ◆ The machine meets the Wisconsin definition of an ATV.

An out of state registered ATV that is in Wisconsin longer than 15 consecutive days *must* be registered in Wisconsin.

In order for the registration from your home state to be recognized in Wisconsin, your state must keep a systematic, updated and renewed information record on file showing ATV owner information. Typically the ATV owner information is the owner's name & address & the serial number, make, model and year of the ATV. A "title only" system is not considered registration. If you are in doubt please contact your local Wisconsin DNR Service Center.

Special attention for Illinois, Michigan and other states:

- ◆ Illinois and Michigan do not have an ATV registration system that is recognized in Wisconsin. If your Illinois or Michigan machine meets the Wisconsin definition of an ATV and you plan to operate the ATV in Wisconsin, **you must register the ATV in Wisconsin or obtain a validated receipt in Wisconsin prior to operating in this state.**
- ◆ All out of state registered machines must meet the Wisconsin definition of an ATV in order to legally operate in Wisconsin.
- ◆ At this time, Wisconsin does not have a trail pass for out of state ATVs.

✓ **Avoid delaying your ATV trip by mailing your ATV renewal to the DNR right after you receive your reminder notice.**

Display—Unless you meet the exemptions on page 6, your ATV must display current registration decals. The decals must be prominently visible on both sides of the ATV and in a position which is forward of the operator.



How do I register my ATV?

- ◆ **Renewing Expired Wisconsin Registration**—If the ATV is currently registered in your name, the DNR will mail you a renewal notice. Returning the renewal notice promptly after receiving it will ensure that you receive your updated decals and registration card *before* the current registration expires. Failure to receive the renewal notice does not relieve you of the responsibility to renew the registration.

- ◆ **If you do not have a renewal notice** or if your registration is already expired, you must complete an ATV registration application and have the application form validated or have your renewal notice validated *prior to operating*. You must carry your validated receipt until the new registration card and decals arrive in the mail.
- ◆ **ATV Purchased from a Wisconsin Dealer**—At the time of the sale, the Wisconsin ATV Dealer will help you complete an ATV registration application. Your copy of the registration application signed by the dealer is your validated receipt. You must keep the validated copy with you while operating at all times until your decal and registration certificate arrives in the mail.
- ◆ **ATV Purchased from a Private Party or Out-of-State Dealer**—You must complete an ATV registration application and have the application form validated **at any DNR Service Center** or authorized validation site prior to riding. You must carry your validated receipt while operating until your registration card and decals arrive in the mail. The seller must give you the signed certificate or a bill of sale at the time of the transaction. Also, see transfer of ownership below.

✓ **Wisconsin does not issue titles for ATVs.**

Transfer of ownership

- ◆ **ATVs Previously Registered in Wisconsin**—You must apply for transfer of ownership within 10 days after purchase. The previous owner's CURRENT registration is considered valid for 10 days after purchase. To apply for transfer, complete an ATV registration application and have it validated. If the previous owner's registration is NOT current, you MUST apply for *transfer* of ownership, and *renew* the registration BEFORE operation. You must carry your validated receipt while operating until your registration card and decals arrive in the mail. Transfer fee: \$2, Renewal fee: \$12
- ◆ **ATVs Not Previously Registered in Wisconsin**—You must apply for original Wisconsin registration prior to operation. To apply, you must complete an ATV registration application and have it validated. You must carry your validated receipt while operating until your registration card and decals arrive in the mail. Fee: \$12
- ◆ **When you sell or transfer ownership** of an ATV, you must sign the registration certificate and give it to the new owner at the time of sale or transfer.

Lost or destroyed registrations—If your certificate or registration decals are lost or destroyed, you can apply for a duplicate(s) on a form (#9400-376) provided by the DNR. See your Local DNR Service Center for the form and have it validated before you ride. Fee: \$2

Change of address—Within 15 days of changing your address, you must notify the DNR in writing, stating your new address and the certificate number for the machine you own. At the same time you must write your new address on the registration certificate. This process is important to complete so that you receive a registration renewal notification by mail. Fee: \$0.

Junked ATVs—If you are going to junk an ATV, write “Junked” across the face of the certificate and return the certificate to the DNR. Fee: \$0.

Dealer registration—If you are an ATV manufacturer, dealer, distributor, renter or any combination thereof and engaged in business in this state, you must register with the DNR and obtain a commercial ATV certificate. The DNR will then issue you 3 metal-reflectorized plates. You must attach one plate in a clearly visible place on each ATV that you lease, rent, offer for sale or otherwise allow to be operated as part of your business. You can purchase additional plates from the DNR. **A dealer cannot accept an ATV in trade unless the ATV is currently registered either with the DNR or another state.** Commercial registrations expire every two years. Commercial Fee: \$36. Additional plate Fee: \$12

Exemptions to registration—ATVs are exempt from Wisconsin registration if:

- ◆ The ATV is owned by the United States, another state or another state's political subdivision. The name and owner of the ATV must be displayed in a visible manner.
- ◆ The ATV is registered by a federally recognized American Indian Tribe or Band and the registration program is covered under a DNR agreement with the Indian Tribe/Band. The registration decal must be displayed and the ATV must not have been operated outside the reservation boundaries for more than 15 consecutive days.
- ◆ The ATV is used **exclusively** for racing on a raceway facility. *A raceway facility means an area, including a marked warmup and testing area, specifically designated by a sponsor for the purpose of conducting a sanctioned race or derby for which any required local permits have been obtained.*
- ◆ The ATV is owned by the state of Wisconsin, a Wisconsin county or a Wisconsin political subdivision and the ATV is used for enforcement purposes or emergency purposes. However, decals must be acquired and must be displayed on the ATV. County or municipality. Fee: \$2.

Rules For Operating An ATV

Alcohol and Drugs

It is illegal to operate an ATV under the influence of alcohol or other drugs while on any property that is held open to the public (generally this means—trails, routes lakes/rivers or corridors). Being under the influence is a condition in which a person's ability to operate an ATV, because of the consumption or use of an intoxicant, is impaired to the extent that the person is less able to exercise the clear judgment and steady hand necessary to handle and control the ATV.

✓ **Wisconsin's maximum blood alcohol concentration limit is 0.08% and the limit is strictly enforced. However, a person can be under the influence of alcohol and in violation at lesser concentrations. Avoid alcohol all together while riding.**

Implied Consent law—You are required to provide a sample of your breath if an officer has probable cause to believe you are operating an ATV under the influence. By operating an ATV on areas open to the public you have automatically consented to provide a sample of your breath, blood or urine to an officer who requests the test. If you refuse to provide a breath, blood or urine sample, you will be charged with an additional violation.

✓ **Each year, injury accidents and fatal crashes are caused by riding an ATV after consuming alcoholic beverages. Alcohol slows your reaction time and distorts your judgment.**

Roads

If you are under age 12, you cannot operate **any** ATV on a roadway or route under **any** circumstance.

If you are 12 years old, but under 16, you can't operate an ATV on a roadway (when allowed) *without* a safety certificate.

You cannot operate an ATV upon any part of any freeway, which is a part of the federal system of interstate and defense highways or on any part of any other freeway unless the DOT authorizes ATV use on that freeway.

✓ **Under most circumstances you cannot operate an ATV on any highway or roadway.**

There may be times when you are riding a trail and you encounter a roadway. If so;

- ◆ You can ride directly across any roadway (except freeways), but only after stopping and yielding the right-of-way to all vehicles approaching on the roadway. Crossings under this exception may be made only at a place where no obstruction prevents a quick and safe crossing. For purposes of this exception, “obstruction” includes, but is not limited to impairment of view and dangerous roadway conditions.

You can ride on a roadway that is not seasonally maintained for other vehicle traffic and only if the road is not officially closed to ATV traffic. Check locally to see if this exception exists.

General Age and Safety Certificate Requirements

A state motor vehicle driver's license is not required to operate an ATV. However, operators of certain ages and riding circumstances may dictate that you must possess and carry a Wisconsin or equivalent state's safety certificate. The safety certificate is proof that you have been instructed on the basics of safe ATV operation, laws, ethics and responsibilities. Consult the laws and charts contained within this pamphlet carefully. Determine what is required of you before your ride. If you are still unsure, contact your local DNR service center for assistance.

Safety Certification Requirements

Registration Type	Under 12	At least 12, but under 16	At least 16 and older
<p>Public Use</p> <p>(For riding on areas open to the public)</p> <p>Public Riding: includes all areas open to the public. You should check with local officials to determine if county forest/property, state property or federal property is open. Consider them closed until you are sure.</p> <p>Streams and lakeshores have special restrictions. See page 17 for additional details.</p> <p>Accompanied: means being subject to continuous verbal direction or control by a person over age 18 and not necessarily accompanied on the same machine, except for under 12 operators, then it means being subject to control by the parent.</p> <p>Generally all operators 12, 13, 14, and 15 years old are required to possess a safety certificate. See the specific requirements under each column.</p>	<p>No safety certificate is available if you are under age 12. However, if you are under age 12, you may operate a SMALL ATV only; on designated department trails and only while accompanied by your parent (not your brother, aunt or a friend, etc.) This exception is the only public area riding allowance for under age 12 operation.</p> <p>You cannot ride on the frozen surface waters of the state.</p> <p>A SMALL ATV means an all-terrain vehicle that has 4 wheels and has either an engine certified by the manufacturer of no more than 90 cubic centimeters or an equivalent power unit. (Small ATVs must be registered.</p>	<p>If you are 12, 13, 14 or 15, you may operate an ATV with a valid ATV safety certificate (a valid safety certificate includes certificates issued from another state or a province of Canada).</p> <p>Or:</p> <p>If you are 12, 13, 14 or 15, you may operate an ATV without a safety certificate if you are accompanied.</p> <p>You are strongly encouraged to attend a department ATV safety certification course. See page 10 for details.</p> <p>If riding circumstances require you to have a safety certificate, you must carry the certificate while operating and display it to a law enforcement officer upon request.</p>	<p>If you are 16 or older you may operate an ATV without a certificate and without being accompanied or supervised.</p> <p>You are strongly encouraged to attend a department ATV safety certification course.</p>
<p>Agricultural Use</p> <p>Agricultural Use: does not include riding from your house to an agricultural area as a means of transportation only.</p> <p>Supervision does not require that the person under 12 years of age be subject to continuous direction or control by the person over 18 years of age.</p>	<p>No safety certificate is available if you are under age 12. However, if you are under age 12 and you are operating on lands under the management and control of your immediate family you may operate an ATV of any size without supervision or accompaniment.</p> <p>(Important: See Agricultural Use in the Safety Certification and Roadway Requirements chart)</p> <p>If you are operating on someone else's land, you must be under the supervision of a person over 18.</p>	<p>If you are 12, 13, 14 or 15, you may operate an ATV for agricultural use without a certificate, unsupervised and unaccompanied on lands under the management and control of your immediate family.</p> <p>You are strongly encouraged to attend a safety class and acquire a certificate. (Important: See Agricultural Use in the Safety Certification and Roadway Requirements chart)</p> <p>If you are operating on someone else's land, you must be under the supervision of a person over 18 or hold a safety certificate.</p>	
<p>Private Use</p> <p>Accompanied: means being subject to continuous verbal direction or control and not necessarily accompanied on the same machine.</p>	<p>No safety certificate is available if you are under 12. However, if you are under 12 and you are operating on lands under the management and control of your immediate family, you may operate an ATV of any size without adult supervision or being accompanied.</p> <p>No person under age 12 can operate an ATV of any size on someone else's property unless it is used under the agriculture exception.</p>	<p>If you are 12, 13, 14 or 15 and you are operating on lands under the management and control of your immediate family: you may operate an ATV of any size without a safety certificate, adult supervision or being accompanied.</p> <p>If you are riding on someone else's property, you need either to be accompanied by a person older than 18 or you need a safety certificate.</p>	

ATV Safety Certification may be obtained by successfully completing a DNR sponsored ATV safety course. Volunteer instructors typically offer local courses early spring through fall.

✓ **ATV courses are advertised in your local newspaper at various times of the year. If you want to enroll in an ATV safety course, contact your nearest DNR Service Center or visit us on the web to find an instructor who is currently advertising a class:**

<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/es/enforcement/safety/upcoming.htm>

Safety Certification and Roadway Requirements		(Be sure to check other roadway restrictions)	
Registration Type	Under 12	At least 12, but under 16	At least 16 and older
Public Use (For riding on areas open to the public)	If you are under age 12, you cannot operate any ATV on a roadway or route under any circumstances.	You can't operate an ATV on a roadway without a safety certificate.	You may operate an ATV without a safety certificate on authorized roadways and as long as you follow other roadway requirements listed in this pamphlet.
Agricultural Use Agricultural Use: does not include riding from your house to an agricultural area as a means of transportation only. A slow moving vehicle emblem is not required if the ATV usually operates at speeds greater than 25-mph.			
Private Use		You cannot operate an ATV on state highways under the private property exception.	

There is no residential access allowance that permits you to ride from your house or place of lodging to the nearest trail. You will need to trailer your ATV to an access point on the trail unless you live immediately adjacent to a trail or route and it abuts your property.

Generally you cannot ride on roads, but if a situation allows it, (such as riding a trail adjacent to the roadway and the trail is interrupted by a river) you can ride on the roadway of highways to cross a bridge, culvert or railroad right-of-way. When you are allowed this exception you must follow several rules;

- ◆ The road *must not be* officially closed.
- ◆ You must yield the right-of-way to all vehicle traffic and pedestrians.
- ◆ You must cross in the most direct manner.
- ◆ You must stop the ATV completely prior to crossing.
- ◆ You must cross only at a place where no obstruction prevents a quick and safe crossing.

✓ ***DONOT assume that you can ride next to roads (ditchlines/ right-of ways) the same way snowmobiles do. This general allowance DOES NOT exist for ATV operation.***

Operating an ATV on a road is highly restricted and in most cases unlawful. There are a few exceptions that will allow a person to operate in the highway area. The diagrams on page 12 are intended to help you determine the various terms of a highway and can be used as a guide along with the written rules in this pamphlet. You should consider all highways (roads) and right-of-ways (ROW) closed when riding until you are sure operation is allowed.

Additional Exceptions to road laws.

Routes **on** the roadway surface;

- ◆ See page 22 for a picture of a route sign and arrow. You are allowed to operate an ATV on the roadway surface if it is part of a route. Routes must be posted (signed) and are identified by a green sign with a white silhouette of an ATV and corresponding arrows. The corresponding arrows are white with a green background that show route direction. There are several rules you must follow when operating on a route:
 - You must operate at the extreme right side of the roadway surface.
 - Left turns can be made from any part of the roadway surface as long as it's safe.
 - You must not exceed the route speed limit.
 - You must obey specific hours or times of the year when the route is open, check locally for restrictions.

Routes **next** to the roadway surface (right-of -way or ditch lines);

A route or trail may exist next to a roadway, however these situations are rare. Do not automatically assume you are permitted to ride next to any roadway. Chances are you will be in violation. If this exception exists, you may operate an ATV **next** to a U.S. highway, state, county or town highway **ONLY if the ATV route or trail is posted (signed) and you observe the following rules;**

- ◆ For U.S. numbered highways, state or county highways, the route/trail must be at least 10 feet or more from the roadway and you must ride at a distance of 10 feet or more from the roadway surface. Travel on

U.S., State or County Highways

Example—US 63, State Hwy. 13, County A

As a general rule the entire **Right-of-Way** and **Roadway** is closed to all ATV travel.

IF the ROW is **POSTED** as a trail, you and the trail must be 10 feet from the US, State, or County roadway surface.

DO NOT automatically assume you can ride next to a road under this rare exception.

ATV use on the roadway is permitted **ONLY** under certain situations. See the specifics in the road section.



Means no exception exists to allow recreational operation in this area of the Right-of-Way for U.S., State, or County highways.



Means an exception may exist to allow operation in this area of the Right-of-Way. Check locally for allowances.

10 Feet



Right-of-Way

Roadway

Town Highways

Example—Old Town Road, Johnson Road

As a general rule the entire **Right-of-Way** and **Roadway** is closed to all ATV travel.

IF the ROW is **POSTED** as a trail, you must be off of the hard surface of the town highway.

DO NOT automatically assume you can ride next to a road under this rare exception.

ATV use on the roadway is permitted **ONLY** under certain situations. See the specifics in the road section.



Right-of-Way

Roadway

the median of a divided highway is prohibited except to cross. See the definition of a highway in the back of this pamphlet.

- ◆ For town highways, you must ride next to and not on roadway surfaces. See the definition of a town highway in the definitions.
- ◆ During daylight hours, you may travel in either direction on the trail regardless of the flow of vehicle traffic.
- ◆ At night, you must travel in the same direction as vehicle traffic in the nearest lane.
- ◆ You cannot exceed the posted roadway speed limit or posted ATV speed limit.
- ◆ You must ride with due regard to safety and in compliance with all other laws.

✓ **A route is generally recognized as the signed, traveled portion of a road which was designed to connect a trail through a city and back the trail again.**

State, County, Municipality, Public Utility and Land Survey uses

- ◆ State, county or municipal agencies may allow employees to operate an ATV for emergency purposes or for functions directly related to conducting government business on any highway as long as safety is not jeopardized.
- ◆ A public utility employee may operate an ATV for emergency purposes or for functions directly related to conducting business on any highway as long as safety is not jeopardized.
- ◆ A land surveying operation employee may operate an ATV on any highway for functions directly related to conducting business as long as safety is not jeopardized.

✓ **Unless there is an exception, no ATV can be operated on any portion of any highway.**

If you hold a Class A or Class B hunting (disabled) permit, you may operate an ATV on the roadway portion of a highway (not an interstate) if you are traveling for the purposes of hunting that are allowed by the permit. However, you must meet safety certificate and age restrictions if they apply.

You may operate an ATV on roadways for agricultural purposes if:

- ◆ You meet age and safety certificate requirements.
- ◆ The ATV is registered for agricultural use.
- ◆ The ATV is an implement of husbandry. *An Implement of husbandry is a vehicle or piece of equipment or machinery designed for agricultural purposes, used **exclusively** in the conduct of agricultural operations and used principally off the highway.*
- ◆ The ATV is operated at the extreme right side of the roadway, except left turns may be made from any part of the roadway as long as it's safe to do so.

Helmet Requirements

Registration Type	Under 12	At least 12, but under 16	At least 16 and older
Public Use (For riding on areas open to the public) * See the General Age and Certification Requirements, pg. 10	If you are under age 12, a helmet is required to be worn at all times.*	You are required to wear a helmet except when traveling for the purposes of hunting or fishing.	You are required to wear a helmet under age 18 except when traveling for the purposes of hunting or fishing.
Agricultural Use	A helmet is not required on lands owned and controlled by your immediate family, but it is STRONGLY encouraged.*	A helmet is not required, but it is STRONGLY encouraged.	A helmet is not required, but it is STRONGLY encouraged.
Private Use	A helmet is not required on lands owned and controlled by your immediate family, but it is STRONGLY encouraged.*	A helmet is not required if you are operating on lands under the management and control of your immediate family. However, you are STRONGLY encouraged to wear one. If you are riding on someone else's property you must wear a helmet unless you are traveling for the purposes of hunting or fishing.	A helmet is not required under age 18 if you are operating on lands under the management and control of your immediate family. However, you are STRONGLY encouraged to wear one. If you are under 18 and riding on someone else's property you must wear a helmet unless you are traveling for the purposes of hunting or fishing.
Passengers (Not Recommended)	If circumstances (age and property use) would require you to wear a helmet as the operator, then you as the passenger must wear a helmet under similar circumstances. For example, a helmet would be required for a 12-year-old passenger while the ATV was being operated on public property.		

An ATV cannot be used on roadways under the agricultural exception when the ATV is being used only as a means of transportation to and from work, even if the work site is a farm or an agricultural business.

- ✓ **Riding on roads illegally is the most common violation.**
Stick to the trails and designated ATV routes.

When a helmet is required, the mandatory helmet type is one that is designed for motorcycle or ATV use. A bicycle helmet is not acceptable headgear by law.

- ✓ **Almost all of the victims involved in a fatal ATV crash did not wear a helmet. Save your own life and wear your helmet at all times while riding your ATV.**



Trails

An ATV trail is identified by small (6"X6") brown signs with the white silhouette of an ATV and orange blazer (diamond) signs. Be careful, snowmobile trails also use the orange blazer to mark the pathway of a trail. If the brown and white ATV sign is not present, then you are not allowed to ride an ATV on that trail.

A trail is different than a route and will generally never be on a road or in a ditch. You are only likely to be on a road involving a trail when you cross the road at marked intersections.

The county, town, city or village may designate corridors on land it controls to be used as ATV trails.

- ◆ Counties, towns, cities or villages may designate specific hours or times of the year when the trail is open or closed. Check locally for any restrictions.
- ◆ Some trails may be designated as multiple use trails. On these trails, you could encounter other traffic such as horses, motorcycles other ATVs and bike riders. You should check locally to determine specific restrictions or allowances.

Trail Signs

Trail and Route signs are standardized across Wisconsin. Be familiar with them before your ride. See page 22 for examples.

When a County, City, Village or Town creates a route, ATV route signs must be erected along with directional arrow(s), at the beginning of an all-terrain vehicle route and at locations and intervals necessary to enable all-terrain vehicle operators to follow the route.

No person may intentionally remove, damage, deface, move or obstruct any uniform ATV route or trail sign. Nor may anyone intentionally interfere with the effective operation of any uniform ATV route or trail sign if the state, municipality or an authorized individual legally places the sign.

Only authorized individuals can possess an official ATV trail sign. If you are not an authorized individual, merely possessing an official ATV trail sign infers you obtained it illegally.

- ✓ **Leave all signs in place. Someone's life will depend on it.**
If you notice a sign is missing or is down, notify your

State Property

- ◆ Most state properties are closed to ATV use. Inquire with the local property manager to see if any are open to ATV riding.

✓ **Snowmobile trails are *NOT* automatically open to ATV use. In many cases it is illegal to ride an ATV on a snowmobile trail. Violating this law prevents any future opportunities to have joint use trails and even threatens the existence of established joint-use trails.**

Speed, Distance and Hours Restrictions

You must slow your ATV to **10-mph** or less;

- ◆ When you are riding within 100 feet of a person who is not on an ATV, snowmobile, motorcycle or in a motor vehicle. This includes, but is not limited to slowing for anglers, hikers, bicyclists, joggers, etc.
- ◆ When you are riding within 100 feet of an ice fishing shanty (ice shack).
- ◆ When you are riding an ATV within 150 feet of a home or dwelling

Local rules may also exist that regulate hours, days or season of ATV operation. You should check locally for these restrictions.

You must yield the right-of-way to all pedestrians under any circumstance.

✓ **Be courteous. Your actions are judged by everyone and can lead to additional restrictions.**

Other Operation Rules, Requirements or Restrictions

You must obey all regulatory signs, such as stop signs, yield signs and speed limit signs.

You can't operate an ATV at speeds that are unreasonable or improper.

✓ **When riding at night you can easily override your ATV's headlight. To be safe and to make sure you can stop in time to avoid a hazard, do not operate at high speeds at night.**

You can't operate an ATV in a careless manner so that it endangers a person or property.

You can't operate an ATV on a person's private property without the permission of the owner or lessee. Failure to post the property does not give you the authority to ride there.

✓ **One of the most common violations is ATV riding on closed county forests and closed forest roads. Ride only on designated trails and areas open to ATVing. To find out what is open or closed, check with your local forester or county parks and recreation department or visit us on the web for trail opportunities; <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/cfal/lr/atv/trails.html>**

You can't operate an ATV on or across a cemetery, burial ground, campground, park, school grounds or church property without the consent of the owner.

You can't operate an ATV on an operating airport or landing facility unless you are authorized and conducting airport business.

You can't operate an ATV on Native American lands without the consent of the tribal governing body.

You can't allow a person to operate an ATV if he or she is;

- ◆ Prohibited by law.
- ◆ Has not obtained the required safety certificate (or underage).
- ◆ Incapable of operating an ATV because they are physically or mentally unable to exercise physical control over the speed or direction of an ATV.
- ◆ Under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

You can't transport a firearm or bow on an ATV unless the firearm is unloaded and encased or the bow is unstrung or in a carrying case.

You can't drive, push, pursue or chase any animal with an ATV except that you can use an ATV for normal farming/herding operations; however, no wildlife can be chased.

You can't refuse to stop your ATV after being requested or signaled to do so by a law enforcement officer.

You can't refuse to allow your ATV to be inspected by a law enforcement officer for suspected exhaust violations or other suspected equipment violations.

You can't operate an ATV in any navigable water, or on the exposed bed of any navigable water (including exposed lakebeds in front of your property) except:

- ◆ To cross a stream by use of a bridge, culvert, ford or similar structure provided the crossing is in the most direct manner practical.
- ◆ To launch or load a boat, canoe, or other watercraft in the most direct manner practical.
- ◆ To access the frozen surfaces of any navigable waters provided the crossing or access is in the most direct manner practical.
- ◆ To operate the ATV on the frozen surface of a navigable water (public registration is required).

"Bed of a navigable water" means all of the area below the ordinary high water mark of a lake or stream. (During low-water periods, there may be several feet of exposed lake or streambed that is closed to ATV and other vehicular traffic.)

✓ **It is not unlawful to operate an ATV with a passenger. However, it is strongly recommended you operate the machine according to the manufacturer's guidelines.**

Equipment—Lights, Reflectors and Exhaust Requirements.

Your ATV must have a **white** headlamp and a red tail lamp that is turned on during the hours of darkness or when you are riding on a highway right-of-way (routes) or when crossing roads. It is recommended that your lights stay on whenever you ride.

- ◆ Designer headlamp covers (red, yellow, blue, etc., lens covers or colored headlamp bulbs) are not legal to use when you are riding during the hours of darkness or when you are riding on a highway right-of-way (routes) or when crossing roads. Under most circumstances you cannot use colored headlamp covers.
- ◆ Your headlamp must be able to illuminate any person at a distance of 200 feet in front of the ATV.

Your ATV must be equipped with a tail light that is visible for 500 feet to the rear during the hours of darkness.

✓ *The factory ATV lights, brakes, muffler and spark arrester will meet or exceed the requirements of state law. There is no need to change them unless they are in ill repair or worn.*

Your ATV must be equipped with at least one brake, operated either by hand or by foot.

Your ATV must be equipped with a functioning muffler to prevent unusual or excessive noise.

Your ATV must be equipped with a spark arrester at all times, even during the winter.

✓ *Excessive or unusually loud ATVs are illegal and hurt Wisconsin's trail system. Do not increase your exhaust noise or operate with your exhaust system in excess of normal operation. Wisconsin enforces the sound limits and penalties can be severe; however, the worst thing about a loud ATV is that it causes properties to be permanently closed to ATV riding.*

ATV Renter/Rental Requirements

Rental Businesses

You can't rent or lease an ATV to a person who will be operating an ATV for the first time unless you provide the person instruction on how to operate an ATV.

- ◆ You can't rent or lease an ATV to a person under 16.
- ◆ You can't rent or lease an ATV to anyone until you ascertain that all riders and operators under 18 have a helmet to use.
- ◆ All rental businesses must have clean, useable helmets available for rent to any renter under 18 or any person under 18 who will be on the rented ATV.

Accidents and Crashes

✓ *If you are involved in a crash, the first thing to do is ensure you are okay and not going to be involved in another crash from a following ATV. You must provide help to anyone else who was involved.*

Any crash that results in an injury requiring treatment by a physician or a fatal incident must be reported as soon as possible to a Conservation Warden or other law enforcement officer. You must file a written report of the incident within 10 days to the DNR. Contact your nearest DNR Service Center or sheriff's office for the accident form #4100-174.

Sanctioned Races

ATVs are exempt from registration **only** if the ATV is used **exclusively** for racing on a racing facility.

During a race, parade, derby or exhibition you may ride on certain roads **only** if the road is blocked off by the county, town, city or village having jurisdiction. In addition;

- ◆ No state trunk highway or connecting highway may be blocked off for an ATV event.
- ◆ The county, town, city or village blocking the road(s) must notify the local police department and the county sheriff at least one week in advance.

If you are the sponsor conducting a sanctioned race or derby on a raceway facility, you must:

- ◆ Make provisions to keep spectators at least 100 feet away from race competitors on the frozen surfaces of public waters.
- ◆ Give notice of the race or derby to the local conservation warden or law enforcement agency having jurisdiction.

During races, ATVs are **not** exempt from the requirements to be equipped with a functioning muffler and a spark arrester.

Children under the age of 12 cannot compete in races. There is no provision that allows a child of this age to ride any ATV except for the allowances listed on page 8. Note: At the time of this printing, the Legislature was considering changes to child-racing allowances.

A *sanctioned race* or derby means a competitive ATV event sponsored by a local unit of government, chamber of commerce, an all-terrain vehicle club, promoter, or similar organization.

A *raceway facility* means an area, including a marked warmup and testing area, specifically designated by a sponsor for the purpose of conducting a sanctioned race or derby for which any required local permits have been obtained.

Local Ordinances—Town, City or County Rules

Counties, towns, cities and villages may regulate ATV operation (including hours, trail temperature/condition restrictions and times of the year) on ATV trails or routes by creating local laws. The ordinances ***MUST*** be on file with the DNR. Check locally for the specific laws.

Liability of Landowners

◆ Landowners who allow ATV trails to cross their property are not required to keep the premises safe for recreational activities, to inspect the property, or to give warning of an unsafe condition, use, or activity on the property. They are generally held free of liability but there are a few requirements. If you would like to know more about this law please contact you local DNR service center.

✓ *Be mindful of your actions at all times while riding an ATV. Private property owners and counties provide most of the trails you ride on. Their continued support keeps YOUR trails open.*

Enforcement

Any conservation warden, officer of the state patrol or inspector, county sheriff or municipal peace officer may enforce ATV laws.

Trailer Information

Title

If the combined weight of a Wisconsin ATV, trailer and accessories over 3,000 pounds, you will need to title the trailer with the Wisconsin DOT and equip the trailer with brakes and brake lights.

Trailer lighting

You cannot operate a motor vehicle or tow a trailer during the hours of darkness unless it displays the lighting equipment as prescribed in Section 347 of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Safety chains

Safety chains are required on all towed vehicles and trailers. For further information contact the Wisconsin DOT.

Motorcycles

Motorcycles are not ATVs. Check with local county officials to locate motorcycle riding areas. Under most circumstances, motorcycles are not permitted on any ATV trail.

ATV Operator's Code Of Ethics

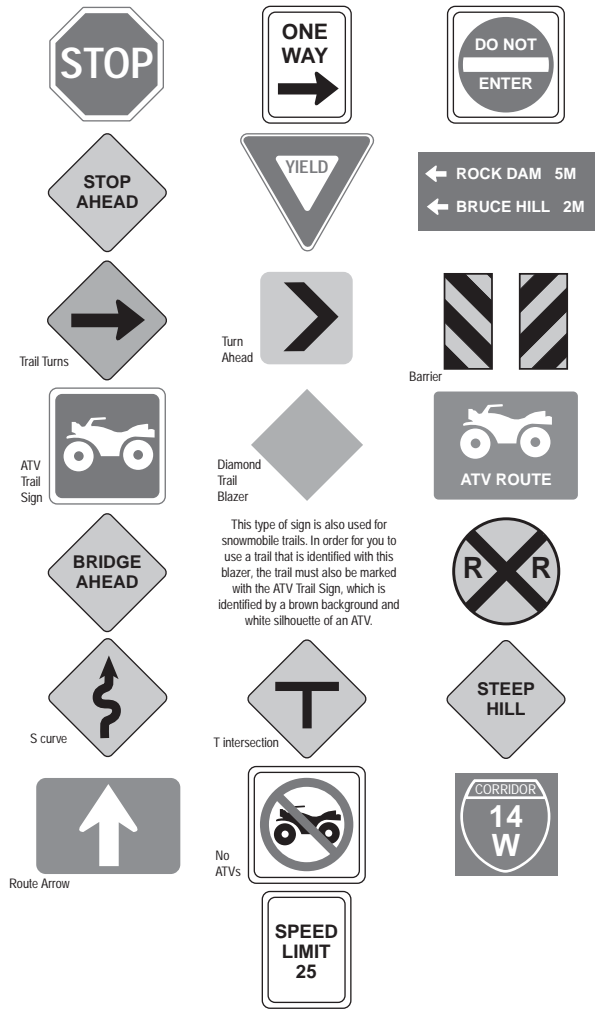
1. I will be a good sportsperson. I recognize that people judge all ATV owners by my actions. I will use my influence with other ATV owners to promote exemplary conduct.
2. I will not litter trails or camping areas. I will not pollute streams or lakes.
3. I will not damage living trees, shrubs, or other natural features.
4. I will respect other people's property and rights.
5. I will lend a helping hand when I see someone in distress.
6. I will make myself and my ATV available to assist with search and rescue.
7. I will not interfere with or harass hikers, skiers, snow-shoers, ice fishermen or other sportspeople. I will respect their rights to enjoy our recreation facilities.
8. I will know and obey all federal, state and local rules regulating the operation of ATVs.
9. I will not harass wildlife. I will avoid areas posted for the protection or feeding of wildlife.
10. I will not ride off the trails or marked roads open to ATVs. I will avoid cross-country travel unless specifically authorized.

Basic ATV Safety Code

1. Do not consume alcohol or take drugs prior to or during your ATV trip. Doing so increases your chances of being injured or killed.
2. Use a full size helmet, goggles, or visor to prevent injuries from twigs, stones, ice chips and flying debris.
3. Slow down and don't cut to the inside of the trail corners, it's dangerous and illegal.
4. If you operate an ATV at night, don't override your lights.
5. Only one person should be riding on the ATV.
6. Know the terrain you are going to ride. If it's unfamiliar to you, ask someone who has traveled over it before.
7. Drowning is one of the causes of ATV fatalities. Whenever possible, avoid the ice.
8. Wear sensible, protective clothing designed for ATViing.
9. Do not put your feet down on the ground for balancing around corners, your feet may get caught under the tires and in moving parts of the ATV.
10. Know the weather forecast, especially the ice and snow conditions in the area.
11. Be sure your ATV is in top-notch mechanical condition at the beginning of the season and throughout the months of use.
12. Familiarize yourself with the ATV you are driving by reading in detail the manual accompanying the ATV.
13. Always use the buddy system and ride with a friend on his/her own ATV.

Common Signs

Below are some of the common signs you might see while ATVing.



How Is the Wisconsin ATV Program Paid For

You help fund the Wisconsin ATV program. When you register your ATV the fees are credited into a special account with the majority of the funds dedicated to the trail system. Other portions of the collected fees help manage law enforcement operations, the registration system, and incidentals related to running the ATV program.

In addition to the registration fees you pay, there are several other sources of revenue that are used by the ATV program.

One source of program income is derived from the state gasoline excise tax. Currently, there is a formula transfer of gasoline excise tax on 25 gallons of gasoline for every ATV registered by the end of each February. These funds are dedicated to the trails program.

Each year the Department of Natural Resources distributes the majority of the ATV trail dollars to counties and other municipalities that participate in the ATV program through a grant process. These grants reimburse counties for the cost of trail maintenance. Grants are also awarded for infrastructure improvements such as trail or bridge rehabilitation and the development of new trails or intensive use areas.

Who is involved?

Wisconsin Conservation Wardens and sheriff patrols monitor ATV activities on trails, routes and corridors to ensure people are abiding by the rules. They offer ATVers assistance and are available to assist you with information about the trails. The Conservation Warden and deputy are your keys to keeping a healthy trail system. You can help by respecting the rules and setting a good example for others to follow.

The Off-Road Vehicle Council was created in 1986 to help guide the Department with all matters related to ATVing including the distribution of ATV trail funds to counties. The Council is made up of 7 volunteers from various parts of the state. Council members offer recommendations to the Department on legislative issues, safety concerns and sponsor funding requests.



What is a Trail Ambassador?

A Trail Ambassador is a volunteer who helps to keep trails safe by identifying problems and reporting them to proper officials. Want to learn more or activate your club? Contact the Department at 608-267-7455.

Definitions

Accident—A crash involving an ATV is any accident (regardless of the number of vehicles involved) which results in a fatality or an injury that requires medical treatment by a physician.

Accompanied—Subject to continuous verbal direction or control, but not necessarily on the same machine.

Agricultural purpose—A purpose related to beekeeping, operating commercial feedlots, dairying, egg production, floriculture, fish or fur farming, forest and game management, grazing, livestock raising, operating orchards, plant greenhouses or nurseries, poultry raising, raising grain, grass, mint or seed crops, sod farming or raising fruits, nuts, berries or vegetables.

All-terrain vehicle (ATV)—An engine-driven device which has a net weight of 900 pounds or less, which has a width of 48 inches or less, which is equipped with a seat designed to be straddled by the operator and which is designed to travel on 3 or more low-pressure tires. A low-pressure tire is a tire which has a minimum width of 6 inches, which is designed to be mounted on a rim with a maximum diameter of 12 inches and which is designed to be inflated with an operating pressure not to exceed 6 pounds per square inch as recommended by the manufacturer. (NOTE: the machine must meet *all* qualification restrictions.) See also: Small ATV.

ATV Dealer—a person engaged in the sale of all-terrain vehicles for a profit at wholesale or retail.

Dealer—See ATV dealer.

DNR—Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

DOT—Department of Transportation.

Headlamp—A major lighting device used to provide general illumination, which must display a white light of sufficient illuminating power to reveal any person, vehicle or substantial object at a distance of 200 feet ahead of the ATV.

Highway—All public ways and thoroughfares and bridges on the same. It includes the entire width between the boundary lines of every way open to the use of the public as a matter of right for the purpose of vehicle traffic. Generally—Federal and State Highways are designated by a number. County highways are designated by a letter or letters. Town Highways are generally designated by a name.

Hours of Darkness—The period of time from ½ hour after sunset to ½ hour before sunrise and all other times when there is not sufficient natural light to render clearly visible any person or vehicle on a highway at a distance of 500 feet.

Immediate Family—Only persons who are related as spouses, as siblings or as parent and child.

Implement of Husbandry—A vehicle or piece of equipment or machinery designed for agricultural purposes, used exclusively in the conduct of agricultural operations and used principally off the highway, or a trailer-mounted bulk liquid fertilizer container.

Land Under The Management And Control Of A Person's Immediate Family—Land owned or leased by the person or a member of the person's immediate family over which the owner or lessee has management and control. This term excludes land owned or leased by an organization of which the person or a member of the person's immediate family is a member.

Operate—To exercise physical control over the speed or direction of an all-terrain vehicle or to physically manipulate or activate any of the controls of an all-terrain vehicle necessary to put it in motion.

Operation—The exercise of physical control over the speed or direction of an all-terrain vehicle or the physical manipulation or activation of any of the controls of an all-terrain vehicle necessary to put it in motion.

Operator—A person who operates an all-terrain vehicle, who is responsible for the operation of an all-terrain vehicle or who is supervising the operation of an all-terrain vehicle.

Owner—A person who has lawful possession of an all-terrain vehicle by virtue of legal title or equitable interest in the all-terrain vehicle which entitles the person to possession of the all-terrain vehicle.

Private Property—Land owned or leased by an individual, group of individuals or corporation (not government owned) or lands owned by a member of the immediate family (spouse, siblings, or parent). A trail even though crossing private property is not considered private for the purpose of enforcement of laws, i.e., registration, OWI etc.

Raceway Facility—An area, including a marked warmup and testing area, specifically designated by a sponsor for the purpose of conducting a sanctioned race or derby for which any required local permits have been obtained.

Renter—A person engaged in the rental or leasing of all-terrain vehicles to the public.

Roadway—That portion of a highway between the regularly established curb line or that portion, which is improved, designed or ordinarily used for vehicle travel excluding the berm or shoulder.

Route—A highway or sidewalk designated for use by ATV operators by the governmental agency having jurisdiction. Routes are identified at the beginning point by a sign showing the white silhouette of an ATV on a green background. White directional arrows on a green background show the continuation of the route.

Sanctioned Race or Derby—A competitive ATV event sponsored by a county, town, city or village, by a promoter, chamber of commerce, ATV club or other similar organization.

Small All-Terrain Vehicle—An all-terrain vehicle that has 4 wheels and that has either an engine certified by the manufacturer at not more than 90 cubic centimeters or an equivalent power unit. These machines must be registered.

Street—Every highway within the corporate limits of a city or village except alleys.

Tail Lamp—A device to designate the rear of a vehicle by a warning light which must display a red light plainly visible during darkness from a distance of 500 feet to the rear.

Town Highway—Roads constructed and maintained by the towns (generally these roads are signed with names, for example Old Town Road).

Trail—A marked corridor on public property or on private lands subject to public easement or lease, designated for use by all-terrain vehicle operators by the governmental agency having jurisdiction, but excluding roadways of highways except those roadways which are not seasonally maintained for motor vehicle traffic. Trails are identified by signs showing a white silhouette of an ATV on a brown background.

Used Exclusively on Private Property—Use of an ATV by its owner or a member of his or her immediate family, only on land owned or leased by the all-terrain vehicle owner or a member of his or her immediate family.

Validated Receipt – A copy of your *ATV Registration Application* (form 9400-376) “validated” (stamped PAID) by a DNR office/authorized validation site, or, if purchased from a Wisconsin ATV dealer, a copy of the registration application signed by the dealer, showing proof that registration has been applied for and proper fee paid.

Penalties

The fines for violating the ATV laws range from \$101–\$2,000. You could also face up to one year in jail. In addition, the courts may revoke your privilege to operate an ATV. The ultimate price for violating the rules is the negative effect on the image of all ATVs. Do the right thing...

Slow Down...Ride Sober...& For Life

Need trail information? You can obtain trail maps by contacting your local county official, Chamber of Commerce, Department of Tourism, or you can locate maps through the following web site link: <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/cfa/LR/atv/atvsummer.html>

This publication is available upon request in alternate formats for visually impaired persons. Please contact Karl R. Brooks at 608-267-7455 to request an alternate format.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides equal opportunity in its employment, programs, services and functions under an Affirmative Action Plan. If you have any questions, please write to: Equal Opportunity Office, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240

Wisconsin DNR Offices and Validation Stations

DNR Central Office

Information Center, 101 S. Webster St., Madison..... (608-266-2621)

Southeast Region

Region Headquarters—2300 N. Martin Luther King Dr., Milwaukee..... (414-263-8500)

Plymouth Office—1155 Pilgrim Rd, Plymouth..... (920-892-8756)

Sturtevant Office—9531 Rayne Rd., Suite 4, Sturtevant..... (262-884-2300)

Kettle Moraine State Forest, North unit, Campbellsport..... (920-626-2116)

Kettle Moraine State Forest, South unit, Eagle..... (262-594-6200)

Bong, Racine County, Kansasville..... (262-878-5600)

Bong, Kenosha County Kansasville..... (262-652-0377)

Waukesha Office—407 Pilot Ct., Suite 100, Waukesha..... (262-574-2100)

South Central Region

Region Headquarters—3911 Fish Hatchery Rd., Fitchburg..... (608-275-3266)

Dodgeville Office—1500 North Johns Street, Dodgeville..... (608-935-3368)

Horicon Office—N7725 Hwy. 28, Horicon..... (920-387-7860)

Janesville Office—2514 Morse St., Janesville..... (608-743-4800)

Poynette Office—W7303 Co. Hwy. CS, Poynette..... (608-635-8110)

West Central Region

Region Headquarters—1300 W. Clairemont, Eau Claire..... (715-839-3700)

Area Office—Eau Claire..... (715-839-3777)

Black River Falls Office—910 Hwy. 54E, Black River Falls..... (715-284-1400)

LaCrosse Office—3550 Mormon Coulee Rd., LaCrosse..... (608-785-9000)

Wis. Rapids Office—473 Griffith Ave., Wisconsin Rapids..... (715-421-7800)

Baldwin Office—990 Hillcrest, Suite 104, Baldwin..... (715-684-2914)

Wausau Office—5301 Rib Mountain Rd., Wausau..... (715-359-4522)

Northern Region

Region Headquarters—810 W Maple St., Spooner..... (715-635-2101)

OR—107 Sutliff Ave., Rhinelander..... (715-365-8900)

Woodruff Office—8770 Hwy. J, Woodruff..... (715-356-5211)

Antigo Office—223 E. Steinfest Rd., Antigo..... (715-627-4317)

Park Falls Office—875 S. 4th Ave., Park Falls..... (715-762-3204)

Hayward Office—10220 N. Hwy. 27, Hayward..... (715-634-2688)

Ladysmith Office—N4103 Hwy. 27, Ladysmith..... (715-532-3911)

Superior Office—1401 Tower Ave., Superior..... (715-392-7988)

Ashland Office—2501 Golf Course Rd., Ashland..... (715 685-2900)

Northeast Region

Region Headquarters—1125 N. Military Ave., Green Bay..... (920-492-5800)

Peshigo Office—101 N. Ogden Rd., Peshigo..... (715-582-5000)

Oshkosh Office—625 E. County Rd. Y, Suite 700, Oshkosh..... (920-424-3050)

Sturgeon Bay Office—110 S. Neenah Ave., Sturgeon Bay..... (920-746-2860)

Wautoma Office—427 E Tower Dr, Suite 100, Wautoma..... (920-787-4686)